# PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps of Engineers®

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT

*LOS ANGELES DISTRICT*

**Public Notice/Application No.:** 200100095-LM
**Comment Period:** September 24, 2004 through October 24, 2004
**Project Manager:** Lisa Mangione (805) 585-2143

**Applicant**
Atlantic Richfield Company, ARCO
6 Centerpointe Drive, Room 6-172
La Palma, CA 90623

**Contact**
Fairweather Pacific, LLC
Attn: John Lorentz
4567 Telephone Road, Suite #203
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 658-5600

**Location**
In the Pacific Ocean, approximately two miles northwest of Coal Oil Point, approximately 400 to 900 feet from shore, Santa Barbara County, California (34-25-25.99 N, 119-54-38.02 W).

**Activity**
To remove remnants of a pier and well service structure, construct steel platforms to serve as seabird roosting and nesting habitat and provide additional hard bottom substrate using the toppled concrete caissons and imported quarry rock (see attached drawings). For more information see page 3 of this notice.

Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawings. Interested parties are invited to provide their views on the proposed work, which will become a part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403). Comments should be mailed to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
Regulatory Branch - Ventura Field Office
ATTN: CESPL-CO-R-200100095-LM
2151 Alessandro Drive, Suite 110
Ventura, California 93001

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: lisa.mangione@usace.army.mil

**Evaluation Factors**

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR 230) as required by Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

**Preliminary Review of Selected Factors**

**EIS Determination**- A preliminary determination has been made that an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

**Water Quality**- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance.

**Coastal Zone Management**- The applicant has certified that the proposed activity complies with and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved State Coastal Zone Management Program. The District Engineer hereby requests the California Coastal Commission's concurrence or non-concurrence.

**Cultural Resources**- The site is not considered an historic structure and is not otherwise eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This review constitutes the extent of cultural resources investigations by the District Engineer, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources.

**Endangered Species**- The Corps has determined the project may affect the following federally listed species: blue whale, fin whale, humpback whale, sperm whale, stellar sea lion, Guadalupe fur seal, southern sea otter, sea turtles, white abalone and the California brown pelican. Therefore, consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is required and will be completed prior to issuance of a Corps permit for the project. Letters requesting consultation will be forwarded to the NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under separate cover.

**Essential Fish Habitat – This notice initiates Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Corps has**

**determined the project would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in California waters provided mitigation measures included in the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment prepared by Littoral Ecological & Environmental Services are included as conditions of approval. A copy of the assessment is being forwarded to the NOAA Fisheries Service under separate cover. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the NOAA Fisheries.**

**Public Hearing**- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

**Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required**

The basic project purpose is to remove remnants of a pier and well service structure. The overall project purpose is to remove the pier and well service structure remnants and enhance roosting habitat for the California brown pelican.

The only visible remnants of the structure consist of eight, 8-foot-diameter concrete and steel columns connected with riveted steel trusses that support the remains of a wooden deck. The eight columns form a thick "L" shape measuring approximately 60 feet by 60 feet and are located 850 feet offshore in approximately 32 feet of water. The subtidal remnants and debris consist of 1) steel I-beam pilings that formed the bents, which supported the pier leading from the PRC 421-7 well to the eight columns, 2) steel sheet pilings and imported road fill that surrounded the 421-7 well, and 3) miscellaneous debris in the vicinity of the former pier and well service structure. In addition, the conductors of the two permanently plugged and abandoned wells (421-7 and 421-10) would be cut below the mudline and recovered.

Once the offshore equipment (Load Line Barge) arrives at the project site and is anchored, the offshore portion of the Revised Project will commence. This will include removing the dilapidated topside decking and support structures, cutting the interior well conductor below the seabed, retrieving the seabed debris in the area around the columns, and water-jetting around the base of the columns to fully expose the supporting steel H-piles. When the steel H-pile supports of the concrete columns are exposed, the licensed explosives superintendent will direct the divers in the placement of specifically designed shaped charge explosives on the H-piles. The charges will be detonated in rapid succession to topple the columns. Divers will then determine the position of the toppled columns on the seabed. An onboard review of the divers survey will determine whether any of the toppled columns is covering, or will limit access to, the conductor for Well #10. Following the re-positioning of any columns required per above, the final pile locations will be confirmed.

Prior to installing the new bird roost piles, the Load Line Barge will be moved shoreward on its anchors and the divers will remove any remaining visible pier pilings and debris and cut off the nearshore well conductor. The rock pile surrounding the well conductor will be left as hard bottom substrate.

The barge will then be re-positioned, driving equipment and piles will be rigged on the barge and the four piles will then be driven with a diesel-operated impact-type pile driver to their design depth. Please see Sketch 7 for a diagram of a typical diesel-operated impact hammer. There will be no drilling operations performed as part of the driving operation. Embedment will be achieved solely by impact.

To allow future access to the conductor at well #10, prior to rock placement, a 30-inch pipe will be jetted into the seabed around the well conductor. The pipe will prevent rock from covering the conductor and will be installed after the four piles are installed. Future access to well #10 is being required by the State Lands Commission and the State of California Division of Oil and Gas and Geothermal Resources.

"A-500" quarry rock will be brought to the site on barges, most probably from the Connolly-Pacific site on Catalina Island. When in close proximity to the newly installed piles, the rock barge will be brought alongside the Load Line Barge and the quarry rock will be pushed off the barges by a dozer or other heavy material loader. The height of the quarry rock pile will be approximately four to five feet at the columns and a lesser depth away from the columns. The intended goal is to deposit quarry rock in an area generally encompassing the toppled columns (See Sketch 4). Divers, or a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), will periodically review rock placement and depth and advise which areas have achieved the depth requirement and which areas need additional rock. Following completion of rock deposition, the 30-inch pipe around the well #10 conductor will be trimmed to the elevation of the rock and secured against entry.

**Additional Project Information**

The remnant structure is the visible remains of a pier and well service structure that was built in the 1930's and substantially destroyed during a storm in 1980. The structure has severely deteriorated and is in danger of collapse. In fact, at least a portion of one of the eight columns did collapse during a storm in March 2001. Numerous deep cracks, and areas of spalling exist on the concrete columns. Structural integrity is such that there is no practical method of reinforcement or upgrade of the existing structure that would result in a safe future condition.

The California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) commented on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) in May 2002 that removal of the derelict structure would result in loss of prime roosting habitat for the California brown pelican. The PRC-421 remnant structure has been described by CDFG as ranking 12$^{th}$ out of 60 mainland diurnal roosts sites for brown pelicans from Point Conception to the Mexican border and is the only nocturnal roost site along 120 kilometers of the southern California coastline. Removal of the remnant structure without mitigation has been categorized in the DEIR as a significant adverse impact.

Subsequent to meetings and discussions to resolve and mitigate the impact to brown pelicans, it was concluded that a multi-pile arrangement that would support individual roosting platforms would be acceptable to CDFG in terms of maintaining roosting habitat at the site. In order to remain within the cost estimate and financial liability of complete removal, in accordance with the lease terms, it was proposed that the eight (8) concrete columns be toppled in place. Quarry rock would be placed on the seabed around the toppled columns. Other portions of the project, such as inshore debris removal, would remain as previously planned. ARCO is agreeable to pursuing the project, including the mitigation mentioned above, on this basis.

Roosting area will be provided approximately equal to the area currently available. Based upon photographic interpretation of the deteriorated state of the structure, Fairweather Pacific has made an estimate of the amount of remaining area that may be available for roosting. Generally, the existing roosting area consists of exposed wooden joists and a number of steel beams, although there is apparently one nearly intact section of decking. Fairweather Pacific has calculated a nominal 800 sq. ft. roosting area is presently available. The surface area of the concrete columns is not included in the roosting area since the photographs do not indicate that roosting occurs at these locations, which may be attributed to the proximity of overhanging debris.

Under the existing lease (PRC-421) ARCO remains responsible for the removal of the existing structures within the lease area. As part of the project, ARCO will remove and/or otherwise reposition the visible remains of the remnant structures and incorporate specific components in an underwater reef that will support four piles with new platforms to serve as roosting and nesting habitat for the brown pelican, cormorants, and other seabirds. The California State Lands Commission will issue a lease to the California Department of Fish and Game for the long-term management and maintenance of the underwater reef and platforms.

Four (4) driven pipe piles will support the roosting platforms, therefore each pile will support a roosting area of

approximately 200 sq. ft. Each pile will be configured to support three (3) trapezoidal roosting areas, each positioned at a slightly different elevation. Steel pipe, plates and shapes of a grade appropriate for the predicted environmental and installation stresses will be used in construction. Diamond plate will be provided as the roosting surface. CDFG bird specialists will review the roosting platform design and their recommendations will be incorporated therein.

The intent of the project is to topple the concrete columns in place and place quarry rock on the seabed in and around the immediate vicinity of the columns. The seabed footprint of the toppled columns will be, by nature of the operation, random. CDFG has indicated a preference to leave the toppled column footprint in an "open" configuration, that is, reducing the seabed footprint is not desired, nor required. However, it may be necessary to re-position one or two columns in the event the well conductor becomes covered during the toppling. This re-positioning will involve placing a sling around one end of the column, raising it slightly with a deck-mounted winch and swinging it around, clear of the conductor, by moving the barge. The entire column will not be physically lifted during nesting.

The precise position of the four roosting piles can only be determined after the columns are toppled and surveyed. However, the intended locations will be on the nearshore side of the toppled columns, in-line or in a slight arc, allowing rock barge access from the offshore side. By depositing the quarry rock only from the offshore side it is then not necessary to reset the anchors for barge access to the nearshore side.

In addition to providing cover for the concrete columns, the quarry rock will provide habitat for marine life. The quarry rock will be graded to a nominal "A-500" size, meaning that a random sample of the rock will contain rocks between 200 and 1,000 pounds. There will be no attempt made to specifically place individual rocks. The rock will also provide some limited protection to the lower portion of the piles, preventing scour at the base of the piles and reducing water particle velocities against the piles during peak storm events.

The project will use a minimum of offshore equipment. Dive support, material handling (crane) and pile driving operations will be conducted from a single work platform, a 240' x 60' "Load Line Barge" with its attendant tug. A Load Line Barge is classified by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) for offshore work, i.e., outside of a harbor zone. It will be anchored at the site on a four-point mooring. Anchors will be "flown" to their location to minimize seabed impacts. Inshore anchors may employ "West-Coast" preset moorings. On a single placement of four anchor points the barge will be able to maneuver to all locations necessary to support the operation. In addition to the four (4) moorings for the Load Line Barge, up to two (2) preset moorings are anticipated. One of these preset moorings will be dedicated for the attendant tug for the Load Line Barge and will be located a few hundred feet up/down coast from the barge. The second preset mooring, if needed, will be located several hundred feet offshore and will allow any idle project vessel to moor, or during quarry rock activities will allow a second rock barge to moor. Both of these preset moorings will be located in sediment, away from kelp. Additional watercraft will be available for the initial barge anchor positioning and subsequent retrieval, crew transport and marine mammal observers.

Approximately 30 - 60 days prior to the scheduled offshore equipment mobilization, a pre-project kelp survey will be performed in accordance with a California Coastal Commission approved protocol. During this same window, a final benthic survey will be performed to confirm the location of seafloor features and select the final anchor points.

*Scheduling*

The proposed timing of the project is late August 2005. The offshore work is projected to take 26 days, from site arrival and anchoring to de-mobilization. The project will be conducted 7 days per week, 12 hours per day.

The offshore commencement is constrained by the following dates:

- Start date no earlier than the end of August to allow fledgling birds to leave the remnant structure.
- Avoidance of the gray whale migration period of November 30 to June 1.

**Proposed Special Conditions**

- The permitee understands and agrees that, if future operations by the United States require the removal, relocation, or other alteration, of the structure or work herein authorized, or if, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Army or his authorized representative, said structure or work shall cause unreasonable obstruction to the free navigation of the navigable waters, the permittee will be required, upon due notice from the Corps of Engineers, to remove, relocate, or alter the structural work or obstructions caused thereby, without expense to the United States. No claim shall be made against the United States on account of any such removal or alteration.

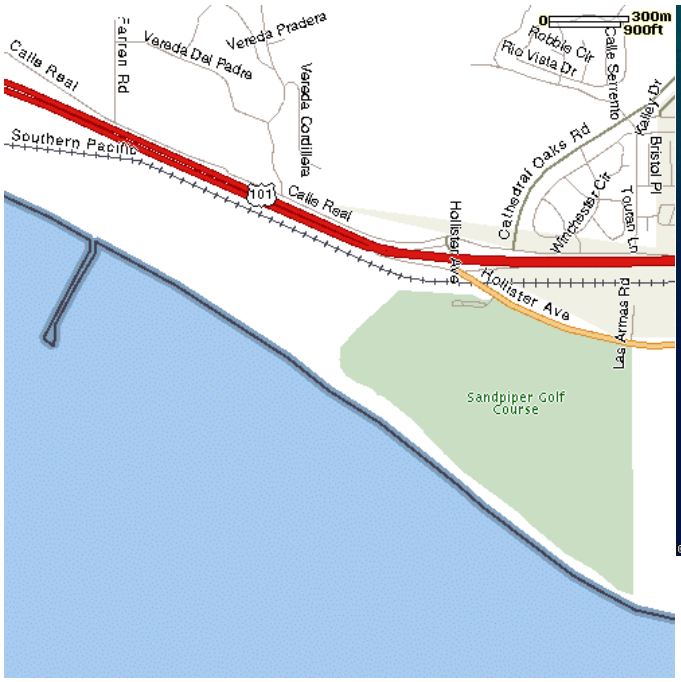
Other special conditions may be added pursuant to the requirements of the NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act consultations.

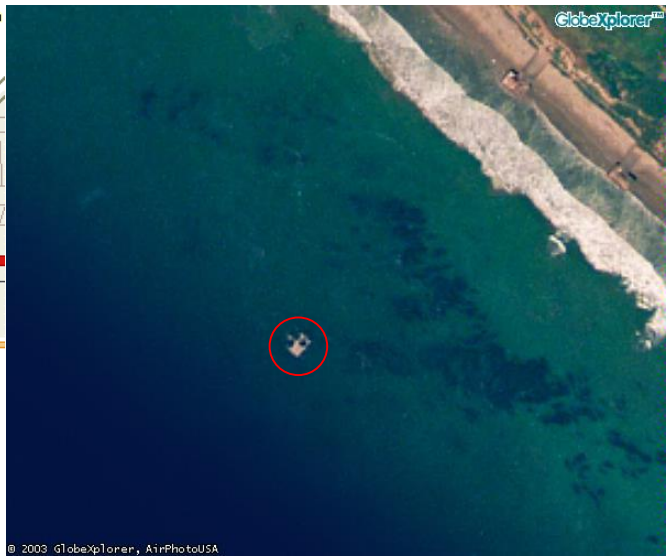
The following documents are available from the Corps upon request: Revised PRC-21 Pier Removal Project Description with project diagrams, Wildlife Protection Plan, Marine Mammal Contingency Plan, Essential Fish Habitat Assessment, Oil Spill Response Plan, Structural Analysis, Anchor Mitigation Plan, Lifting Plan and Vessel Transit Routes.

For additional information please call Lisa Mangione of my staff at (805) 585-2143. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Branch.

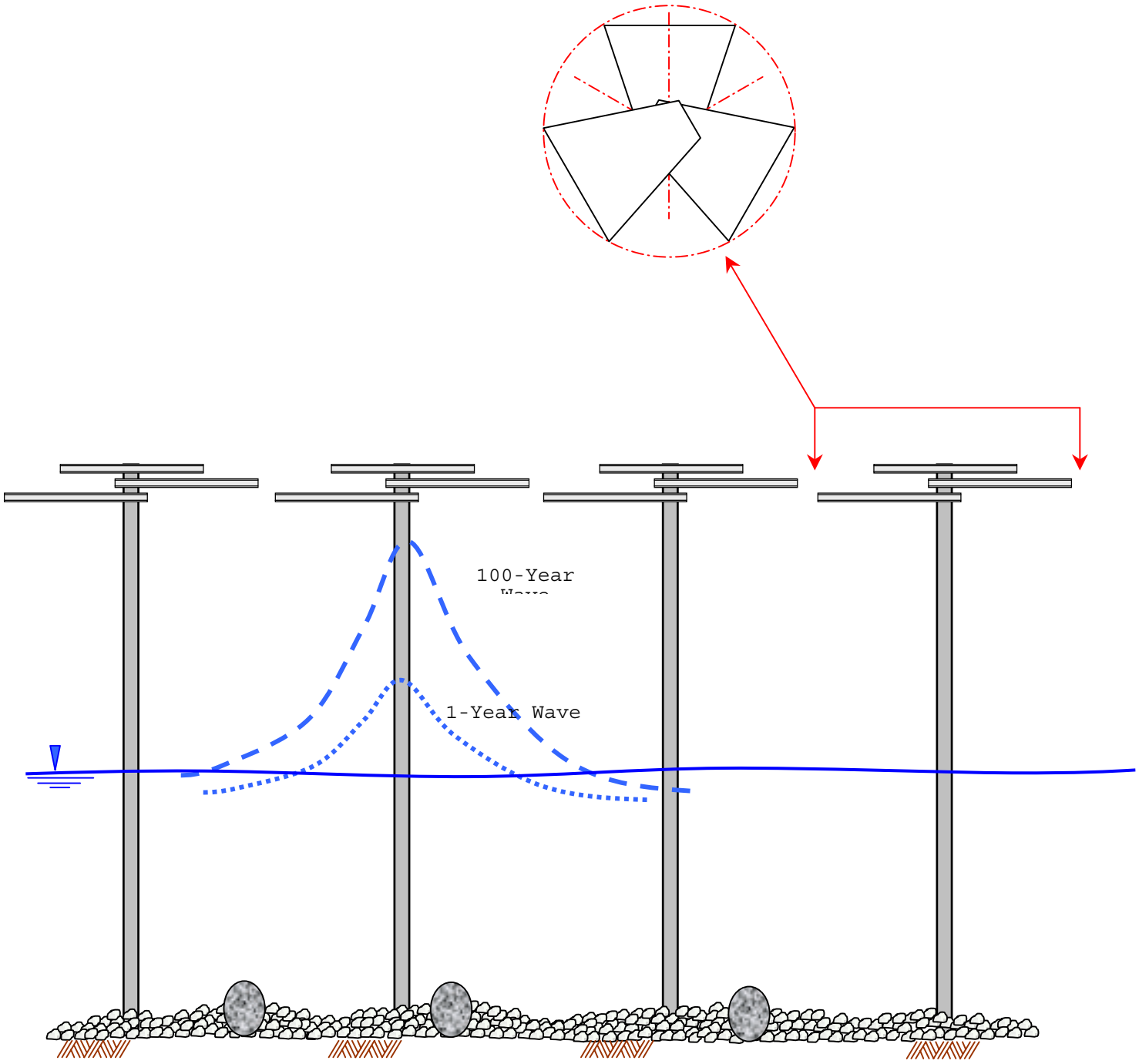
**Project Location**

State Lease PRC-421 is located about 2 miles west of Coal Oil Point in the Santa Barbara Channel, off the coast of the County of Santa Barbara and the City of Goleta (see the photo and map). The visible remnant structure is approximately 850' offshore in about 32 feet of water. Seafloor remains of the pier extend northeastward from the visible structure to shore.



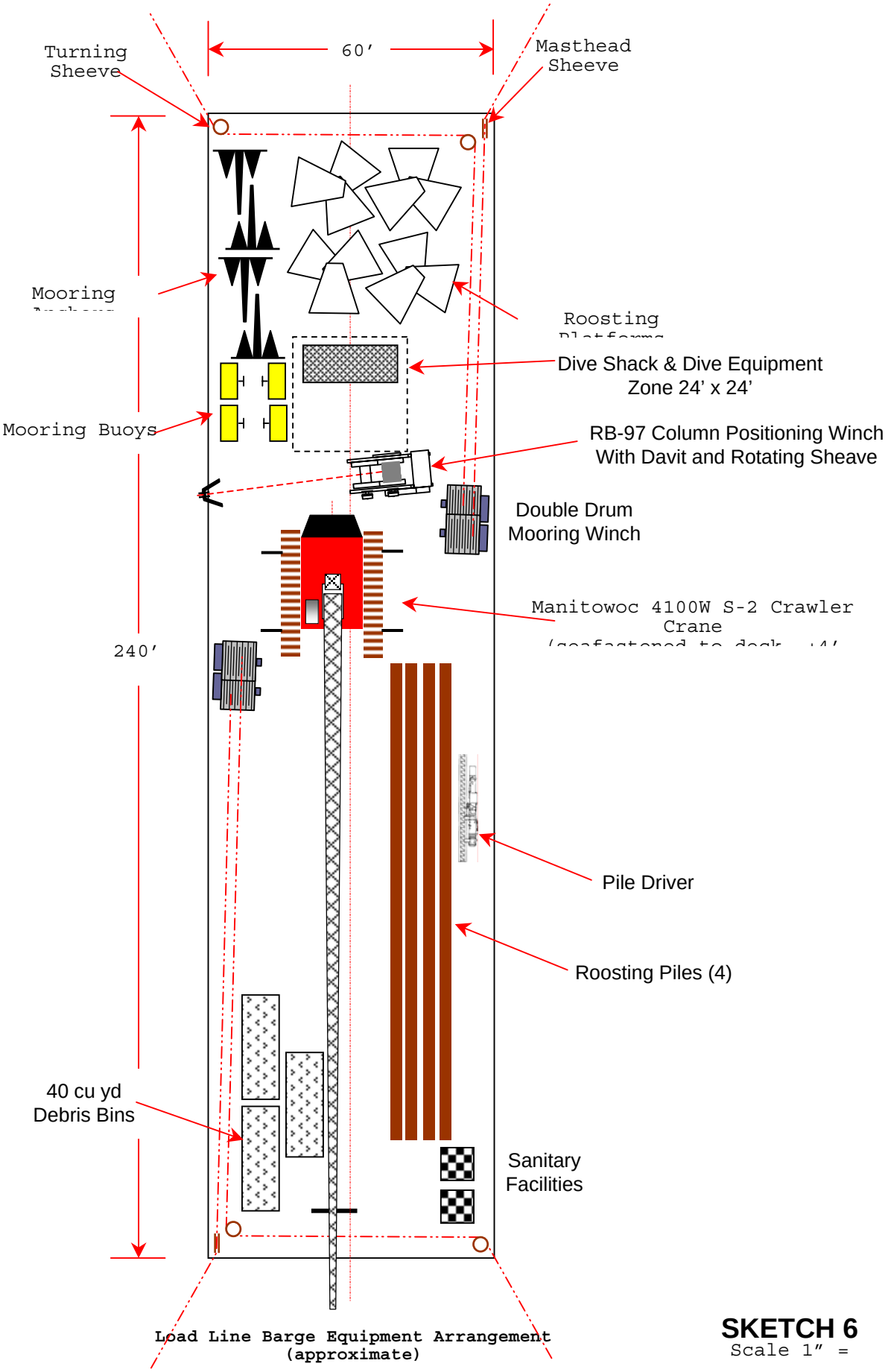




Aerial View of Site
Latitude 34 25 25.99N
Longitude 119 54 38.02W




**Arrangement of Four Piles, Relative Water Elevations and Roosting Plan Views**

## SKETCH 5




**Load Line Barge Equipment Arrangement (approximate)**

**SKETCH 6**
Scale 1″ =